

# Department of Health

## Immunization Regulations Frequently Asked Questions For K – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Officials

### Which schools need to comply with these regulations?

- All K-12<sup>th</sup> grade schools in Vermont need to comply.

### Do these regulations affect ALL students in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade?

- NO. The regulations affect students as they enroll in kindergarten and 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and any student who is newly enrolled into a school, regardless of grade.

### Who reports the immunization status of a 5 year old child?

- The immunization regulations are program enrollment specific to the Dept of Ed (DOE) or the Child Development Division (CDD), they are not age specific.
  - If a child is enrolled in a DOE K-12, public or private (including approved independent and recognized) school, **only** the school will report. Regardless of enrollment in CDD programs, only the school will report.
  - Publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs (typically located within schools) are licensed by CDD. These programs fall under Child care immunization regulations, not school immunization regulations.
  - If a child attends multiple CDD programs, such as Pre-school, EEE, Head Start, and/or registered home child care, each program must hold a copy of the child's immunization record and include the child in their Annual Immunization Status Report.

### Who reports the immunization status of children in a building that houses both a DOE and CDD program?

- The immunization regulations are program enrollment specific, DOE or CDD, to the child, not location specific.
  - Some facilities (public or private) have a DOE kindergarten as well as a CDD pre-school and/or child care program. If a child is enrolled in the DOE program, regardless of additional enrollment in a CDD program, only the DOE program reports that child.

### **What does newly enrolled mean?**

- Some examples: 1) a student moving to Vermont will be newly enrolling into a school in Vermont; 2) a student relocates within Vermont will be newly enrolling into a school, so long as that new school is not within the same school district or supervisory union as his/her previous one. Students who move from an elementary school into middle school or from a middle school into a high school within the same school district or supervisory union are not considered newly enrolling, however compliance must be assessed when advancing to any new school.

### **If a student newly enrolls into a grade other than the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, which immunizations do they need as a condition of enrollment?**

- Students newly enrolling into a school need to have the same immunizations as students in kindergarten (if the student is newly enrolling into the 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade) or students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade (if the student is newly enrolling into the 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

### **Which vaccines do students need before enrolling into school?**

- This depends on the grade the student will be entering:

**Students entering kindergarten** are required to have received the following in accordance with ACIP recommendations on the scheduling of vaccinations and on minimal intervals between doses, allowing for the ACIP-approved four-day grace period:

- 5 DTaP – 4 if the 4<sup>th</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 4 Polio – 3 if the 3<sup>rd</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 2 Measles
- 2 Mumps
- 2 Rubella
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 2 Varicella – waived if the parent or guardian presents the school with documentation indicating the student has a history of disease. The documentation may be a State-supplied form or other paperwork signed by the parent, or documentation from a medical practice.

**Students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade** are required to have received the following in accordance with ACIP recommendations on the scheduling of vaccinations and on minimal intervals between doses, allowing for the ACIP-approved four-day grace period:

- 5 DTaP – 4 doses if the 4<sup>th</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. For students who, after the sixth birthday, have not completed these requirements two doses of Td and one dose of Tdap is acceptable.
- 4 Polio – 3 if the 3<sup>rd</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 2 Measles
- 2 Mumps
- 2 Rubella
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 1 Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (only for students attending residential-based schools (such as boarding schools) who live at these facilities.
- 2 Varicella - waived if the parent or guardian presents the school with documentation indicating the student has a history of disease. The documentation may be a State-supplied form or other paperwork signed by the parent, or documentation from a medical practice.
- 1 Tdap

**What is the ACIP-approved four day grace period?**

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) states that vaccine doses administered up to 4 days before the minimum interval or age can be counted as valid doses. Doses administered 5 days or more prior to the minimum interval or age are not valid doses, and should be repeated.

**Can students claim exemptions?**

- Yes. Exemptions are allowed if there is a medical contraindication to a specific immunization or if the parent/guardian claims a philosophical or religious objection to immunization. Parents must provide the appropriate form to claim an exemption. The form is available through the schools and on the Vermont Department of Health website. A new exemption form is not required annually but must be signed whenever new requirements apply. Though the law and in turn the regulations state a parent can claim an exemption if the student is in the process of being immunized, in practice, such circumstances are not considered exemptions, and should be handled differently. How these circumstances are addressed is answered in the next question.

**Can students be admitted if they don't yet have the required immunizations?**

- Yes. A school official can provisionally admit a student who is in the process of getting the required immunizations, so long as the student's health care provider completes a form indicating the student is in the process of getting immunized. The form is available through the schools and on the Vermont Department of Health website. Provisional admittance is temporary and used when waiting between doses in a vaccine series, waiting for a scheduled appointment for vaccination, or waiting for transferred records to arrive. Provisional admittance can not exceed one year.

**When is it appropriate to exclude a student?**

- Some examples: 1) Provisional admittance has exceeded one year. 2) Failure to respond to written notices of immunizations due with a signed provisional admittance form. 3) As directed by the Vermont Department of Health in the event of an outbreak.

**How do I know that a student has had chickenpox disease (and does not need to have had the 2 doses of the chickenpox vaccine)?**

- Parents must provide documentation stating their child has had chickenpox. A State-supplied form is available through the schools and on the Vermont Department of Health website. This form does not need to be completed or signed by a health care provider, as many providers may not be able to verify their patients had disease. Parents may sign the History of Chickenpox Disease form, or provide other documentation stating their child has had disease. This is not considered an exemption and the exemption form should not be used for this purpose.

**What requirements are asked of schools?**

- Schools are required to verify that students have obtained the required immunizations or are exempt from one or more of them. However, schools need only verify compliance when a student enters kindergarten or 7<sup>th</sup> grade or when a student, regardless of grade, newly enrolls into a school. Schools do not need to verify compliance annually, except when a student enters a new school, such as advancing from middle to high school.
- In addition to verifying compliance, schools are required to report the immunization status of students in aggregate to the Immunization Program annually. Schools are only required to report on students enrolling in kindergarten and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Schools are not asked to report on newly enrolled students.